

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01
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R 261010Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6949
INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0910

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT SOPN PGOV EAID MP CH ETRN
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - AUGUST 16 (SUMMARY)

REF: PORT LOUIS 872 (DTG 190700Z AUG 77)

1. THIS WEEK THE PRIVATE SECTOR DISCLOSED PARTIAL
RESULTS OF A PUBLIC OPINION POLL IT HAD COMMISSIONED
FROM A FRENCH FIRM IN APRIL. ALTHOUGH TWO-THIRDS OF
THE RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH THEIR
MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE, HALF SAID THEY WOULD
URGE THEIR CHILDREN TO EMIGRATE, ALL OF WHICH SHOWS
A CERTAIN LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE. 54 PER-
CENT FAVOR SOCIALISM, WHILE ONLY 7 PERCENT
LIKE COMMUNISM 54 PERCENT WANT BASIC REFORMS BUT
ONLY 27 PERCENT ARE FOR "RADICAL" CHANGE, WHILE
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15 PERCENT LIKE THE STATUS QUO. FAVORITE FOREIGN
COUNTRIES ARE THE UK, FRANCE, INDIA AND THE U.S.,
WITH CHINA AND THE USSR VERY FAR BEHIND. THE PER-
FORMANCE OF THE LABOR PARTY RECEIVED HIGH MARKS FROM
ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE. THE PRIVATE
SECTOR CONCLUDED THAT MAURITIAN ATTITUDES ARE MUCH
CLOSER TO THOSE OF PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

THAN THOSE OF THIRD WORLD AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

2. THE MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) OBTAINED A COPY OF THE FULL POLL RESULTS CLANDESTINELY, AND ENJOYED ITSELF BY REVEALING SOME OF THE SUPPRESSED DATA, FOR EXAMPLE THAT 90 PERCENT OF MAURITIANS WANT MORE GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE ECONOMY, 59 PERCENT FAVOR NATIONALIZATION OF SUGAR FACTORIES, TRANSPORT AND HOTELS (WITH ONLY 17 PERCENT OPPOSED) AND TWO-THIRDS WANT TO MAKE CREOLE AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE (ALL THESE ARE POSITIONS ADVOCATED BY THE MMM). ALSO, 45 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THE MMM WOULD WIN NEW GENERAL ELECTIONS, WITH ONLY 29 PERCENT BETTING ON THE GOVERNMENT COALITION. THE MMM WAS ACCUSED, IN TURN, OF "ESPIONAGE" AND OF FURTHER SUPPRESSING UNPUBLISHED RESULTS THAT SHOWED THE MMM IN AN UNFAVORABLE LIGHT. ON AUGUST 25 MMM SECRETARY GENERAL PAUL BERENGER RELEASED TO THE PRESS THE TEXT OF THE SURVEY'S "PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS," WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS REVEALED THAT A MAJORITY OF MAURITIANS HAVE A FAVORABLE OPINION OF THE MMM AND ITS LEADERS, IN FACT, BERENGER HIMSELF CAME SECOND IN POPULARITY BEHIND PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM, AND WAS TRAILED BY RINGADOO, DUVAL AND BOOLELL.

3. PLANNING MINISTER GHURBURRUN RETURNED FROM A TWO
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WEEK OFFICIAL VISIT TO CHINA TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE CHINESE CONFIRMED THEIR OFFER OF 175 MILLION RUPEES TO BUILD A NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN THE NORTH, BUT DECLINED TO OFFER ADDITIONAL AID. SINCE THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED IN 1972, COST OF THE PROJECT HAS RISEN TO 500 MILLION RUPEES, SO ADDITIONAL FINANCING WILL HAVE TO BE SOUGHT ELSEWHERE, THOUGH THE MINISTER IS CONFIDENT THAT GROUND CAN BE BROKEN NEXT YEAR. AIR MAURITIUS PLANS TO LEASE A BOEING 707 TO START ITS OWN OVERSEAS SERVICE TO BRITAIN, INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA AT THE END OF OCTOBER.

4. THE MMM'S INTERNAL TROUBLES CONTINUE TO PLAGUE THE PARTY. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE IS RECOMMENDING THE EXPULSION FROM THE PARTY OF MAVERICK DEPUTY PR

HARRIS RAMPHUL, WHO IN RETALIATION IS PLANNING A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN DENOUNCING THE MMM AS ANTI-HINDU. PARTY "GURU" HERVE MASSON, WHO WAS CENSURED FOR SOME ILL-ADVISED STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS LAST MONTH, IS RETURNING TO FRANCE TO LIVE. A HINDU

MMM MUNICIPAL COUNCILLOR IN QUATRE BORNES RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY OVER BERENGER'S ATTITUDE OF "BOURGEOIS ARROGANCE" AND WILL SIT AS AN INDEPENDENT, THOUGH HE MAY LATER REJOIN THE LABOR PARTY, WHICH HE QUIT FOR THE MMM. THE MMM PORT LOUIS MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS ARE DEFYING THE GOVERNMENT BY INSISTING ON USING CREOLE DESPITE A CABINET DECISION AGAINST THIS IDEA. THE COUNCIL IS NOW TRI-LINGUAL, AS THE COALITION COUNCILLORS CONTINUE TO USE ONLY FRENCH AND ENGLISH.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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